

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 /028 W

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R 230905Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7905

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR, RP

SUBJECT: CIVAIR OPEN SKIES -- THE BALIKBAYAN FARE

REF: MANILA 10703

1. PAL IS CONTINUING ITS PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST PANAM ON THE BALIKBAYAN FARE ISSUE AND HAS ENLISTED BULLETIN TODAY NEWS COLUMNIST JESUS E. BIGORNIA IN ITS CAUSE.

THE DAILY EXPRESS HAS ALSO PRINTED PAL VP FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS DOMINGO ABADILLA'S LATEST RELEASE IN ITS LETTERS COLUMN. ABADILLA'S CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH STATES RATHER OMNIOUSLY--QUOTE. SHOULD THE USCAB FINALLY DISCONTINUE THE BALIKBAYAN FARE ON THE STRENGTH OF PANAM'S OPPOSITION, THE BALIKBAYAN PROGRAM WHICH IS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL AND MOST POPULAR TOURISM PROJECT OF THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT WOULD COLLAPSE. THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCH A TRAGIC EVENTUALITY SHOULD BE LAID SQUARELY AT THE DOOR OF PANAN, THE LONE COMPLAINANT AND OPPOSITOR (SIC) OF THE BALIKBAYAN FARE. UNQUOTE.

2. LEAVING ASIDE THE PAL RHETORIC, IT IS NONETHELESS NECESSARY TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE GOP ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE BALIKBAYAN FARE -- NOT ONLY AS A MARKET PROMOTION PROJECT FOR PAL OR TOURISM IN GENERAL, BUT ALSO AS A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO WIN OVER THE FILIPINO OVERSEAS COMMUNITY TO THE RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE MARTIAL LAW GOVERNMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION,

PHILCAB EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PACIFIC AGCAOILI HAS EXPRESSED TO US HIS CONCERN REGARDING THE PROPOSED USCAB HEARING ON THE BALIKBAYAN FARE AS WELL AS HIS HOPE THAT THE PROGRAM WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

3. WE BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BRING THE FOREGOING TO THE ATTENTION OF THE USCAB.
SULLIVAN

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